

## CLAIMS

I hereby claim:

1. A trailer hitch storage apparatus comprising:

a mounting plate configured to be attached to a vehicle;

at least one receiving bracket extending from the mounting plate configured to receive the tubular support of a trailer hitch; and

5 a hanger configured to fit through a hitch pin hole of the tubular support, said hanger extending from the mounting plate.

2. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the hanger comprises a first section perpendicular to the base plate and a second section angled upwardly from said first section.

3. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the hanger comprises a center post configured to fit through a hitch pin hole of the tubular support, said center post extending from the mounting plate between first and second receiving brackets.

4. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 3, wherein the center post includes an aperture at its distal end configured to receive a securing means.

5. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 4, wherein the securing means is an anti-theft device that prevents removal of the trailer hitch from the storage apparatus.

6. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 5, wherein the anti-theft device is a lock inserted through the aperture on the center post.

7. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 3, wherein the receiving brackets and the center post are pivotally connected to the mounting plate.

8. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 3, wherein the receiving brackets and the center post are hingedly attached to the mounting plate.

9. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mounting plate includes a horizontal engagement plate connected to the upper end of the base plate, configured for attachment of the apparatus to the inner wall of a truck bed wall.

10. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 1, wherein the mounting plate, receiving bracket and hanger are integral.

11. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 3, further comprising at least one hole on each receiving bracket configured to receive a hitch pin.

12. A trailer hitch retention device for use in combination with a truck or SUV comprising:

a plate body including apertures configured to receive fasteners to secure the plate body to a vehicle wall and a horizontal extension projecting from a central region on the plate body for providing a first support to the tubular extension of a detachable trailer hitch through a hitch pin receiving hole on said trailer hitch; and

at least one support member including a pair of arms extending from the plate body for retention and support of a trailer hitch.

13. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 12, wherein the support member includes at least one hole for receiving the end of a hitch pin.

14. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 12, wherein the horizontal extension defines a transverse dimension greater than a transverse dimension of the tubular support of the trailer hitch and includes a hole for receiving a securing device.

15. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 12, wherein the trailer hitch retention device is collapsible to provide a space saving alternative when not in use.

16. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 12, wherein the horizontal extension and side support members are pivotally attached.

17. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 14, wherein the securing device is a cotter pin.

18. The trailer hitch retention device of claim 14, wherein the securing device is a lock.

19. A collapsible trailer hitch storage apparatus comprising:

a mounting plate configured to be attached to a vehicle;

at least one receiving bracket extending from and pivotally attached to the mounting plate, for receiving the tubular support of a trailer hitch;

a hanger attached to the mounting plate, configured to fit through a hitch pin hole of the tubular support.

20. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 19, further comprising at least one hole on the receiving bracket configured to receive a hitch pin.

21. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 19, wherein the hanger includes an aperture at its distal end configured to receive a securing means.

22. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 19, wherein the securing means is a lock to prevent the theft of the trailer hitch from the storage apparatus.

23. The trailer hitch storage apparatus of claim 19, wherein the hanger comprises a first section perpendicular to the base plate and a second section angled upwardly from said first section.

24. A method of storing a hitch trailer hitch, the method comprising the steps of:

a) providing a trailer hitch storage apparatus comprising:

a mounting plate configured to be attached to a vehicle;

at least one receiving bracket extending from the mounting plate configured to

5 receive the tubular support of a trailer hitch; and

a hanger configured to fit through a hitch pin hole of the tubular support, said hanger extending from the mounting plate; and

b) resting a tubular support of the trailer hitch between the arms of the receiving bracket in a manner such that the center post projects through a hitch pin receiving hole of  
10 the tubular support.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of placing a securing means through an aperture on the hanger.

26. The method of claim 24, wherein the receiving bracket and the center post are pivotally connected to the mounting plate.

27. The method of claim 24, wherein the trailer hitch storage apparatus further comprises at least one hole on a receiving bracket configured to receive a hitch pin.

28. The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of placing one end of a hitch pin through one of the holes on the receiving bracket and resting the other end of the hitch pin on the hanger.

29. The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of storing a hitch pin and cotter pin within the tubular support.